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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6231
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA IMMEDIATE 0103
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE 0246
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA IMMEDIATE 0009
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 1618
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE 0399
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 1969
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE 3134
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE 8508
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/22/2017
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SO](#) [BU](#) [BE](#)
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR AMISOM: BELGIAN ENGAGEMENT WITH
BURUNDI MILITARY - QUESTION OF BURUNDI'S CAPABILITY REMAINS

REF: A. BRUSSELS 2550
[1](#)B. STATE 110195

Classified By: Political Counselor Theodore H. Andrews, reasons 4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (U) This cable contains an action request. Please see
para 5 below.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Subsequent to Ref A, Belgium's Senior Envoy to the
Great Lakes Region Jozef Smets gave polmiloff a more thorough
and balanced view of Belgian military contributions to
Burundi.

[1](#)3. (C) Smets reported on the mid-July meeting between Belgian
Minister of Defense (MOD) Andre Flahaut and Burundi MOD LTG
Germain Niyoyankana. Niyoyankana had stressed that Burundi's
precondition for participating in AMISOM was having the
necessary equipment, including tanks. "For the protection of
"our" (i.e., Burundian) troops," Smets said, quoting a
Belgian military colleague who had attended the meeting.
Nikoyanakana had reportedly confirmed Burundi's intention to
send a military contingent to AMISOM, under certain
conditions: equipment for at least one battalion was assured,
which the U.S. had promised; Nikoyankana had asked for a
similar contribution from Belgium. Smets made clear that the
Belgian government had as yet made no decision on what type
of help to provide; such an action must await the conclusion
of still continuing cabinet formation talks in Brussels.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Other areas of Belgian support for Burundian
military, Smets said, include training programs: for officers
(former rebel retooling), presently in its fourth session;
management, administration, logistics, planning and medical
staff; military scholarships, training in "clearing
security"; and a possible new project in military
engineering.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Smets asked what the U.S. considers the specific
urgent logistical requirements so that Burundi can field a
contingent to AMISOM, particularly from the U.S., UK and
France. (Request: Post would appreciate guidance for
responding to Smets.)

[1](#)6. (C) Comment: Smets' list does not change the more frank,
earlier assessment polmiloff received (Ref A), that Burundi
was incapable of fielding a single unit, let alone a

battalion. The bottom-line question of absorbability by Burundian military of the equipment it is reportedly demanding from outside nations still appears, in the Belgian point of view, unanswered. End Comment.

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